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Committee on Information

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30 April-11 May 2001

Cooperation between the Department of Public Information and the University for Peace in Costa Rica

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 55/136 B of 8 December 2000, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on cooperation between the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and the University for Peace in Costa Rica as a focal point for promoting United Nations activities and disseminating United Nations information materials. The present report highlights some of the activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information to develop and enhance cooperation with the University for Peace in Costa Rica.
2. In order to maintain and enhance its cooperation with the University for Peace, the Department of Public Information has consistently publicized the activities of the University and provided it with its information output in print, video and audio formats.
3. The Department also participates in the University's substantive activities. In December 2000, for example, it took part in a panel discussion involving executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system on the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004. Organized by the University for Peace and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the panel was part of a ceremony held at the Palais Wilson in Geneva in observance of Human Rights Day 2000. It included a forum on "Human Rights Education: a Contribution to a Culture of Peace" that was addressed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
4. The Department has continued to publicize the activities of the University for Peace in its print output, including press releases. For example, the recent donation by the Canadian International Development Agency to the University for Peace in support of its new programme was reflected in a press release produced by the Department in January 2001. The Department will continue to publicize the activities of the University for Peace related to the issues of concern to the United Nations.
5. For its public information outreach, the University for Peace also receives on a regular basis copies of the Department's weekly television news magazine "UN in Action".
6. Commencing with the 1999 edition, the *Yearbook of the United Nations* will include a summary of the Secretary-General's report on cooperation with the University for Peace and the text of the General Assembly resolution on the subject.
7. For almost two decades, United Nations Radio has maintained a close working partnership with Radio for Peace International — a short-wave broadcasting station that transmits its programming from the campus of the University for Peace in Costa Rica. Radio for Peace International retransmitted taped and news



programmes of United Nations Radio in English, French and Spanish to audiences in the Caribbean and Central America. Starting in September 2000, when United Nations Radio launched its daily live news and current affairs programme in the six official languages, Radio for Peace International began broadcasting the programme in English and Spanish to same target regions.

8. As the University for Peace develops its new academic and research programme, particularly in support of education in the culture of peace and conflict prevention, the Department of Public Information will continue to strengthen its cooperation with the University with a view to disseminating more effectively information about its programme activities and accomplishments.



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Progress report on the implementation of the pilot project on the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In resolution 55/136 B of 8 December 2001, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Committee on Information at its twenty-third session a progress report on the results of the implementation of the pilot project for the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations, and declared its intention to examine before the end of 2001 the final report on the results of the project with a view to taking a decision on the matter during its fifty-sixth session.

2. Furthermore, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to maintain and strengthen the managerial capacity, staff resources, programme output and means of delivery of United Nations Radio in the six official languages and, if feasible, in other languages, in order to ensure the success of the radio pilot project and, to that end, enhance coordination with the United Nations News Centre and the United Nations information centres, as well as cooperation with national and international radio organizations in Member States.

3. In his report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-second session (A/AC.198/2000/6), the Secretary-General stated that the development and

implementation of the pilot project was one of the key components in the Department of Public Information's overall drive to more effectively disseminate United Nations news directly to the media worldwide.

4. The present report provides details on the implementation of the pilot project, including a brief overview of the preparations and the mechanics of launching the project. It also provides a summary of cooperative partnerships that have been established with radio stations and networks for the broadcasting of daily news from the United Nations.

II. Launch of the pilot project

5. The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat launched the radio pilot project on 28 August 2000, targeting audiences in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Caribbean. Measures with regard to staffing, training and transmission facilities were in place to facilitate a launch just before the Millennium Summit, held at Headquarters from 6 to 8 September 2000. Staff were also trained prior to the launch. Arrangements were made with several communications service distributors to provide short-wave transmissions to Africa and the Middle East in three languages: Arabic, English and French. These



far-reaching short-wave transmissions have been tracked, and transmission reports have been received from individual listeners in different regions of the world. Satellite distribution arrangements were made with the service providers to transmit the programming to partner stations in the Caribbean region that, during an earlier survey, had expressed interest in receiving and broadcasting the programme. Other arrangements were being sought with Government information services in the region to ensure wider distribution and broadcasting of the daily programme through national radio stations.

6. In addition to the arrangements made with short-wave and satellite distributors, the Department has ensured the establishment of an effective and multi-pronged system of delivery, since distribution and reception needs vary from one region to another. Other options for broadcasters include analogue telephone feeds, digital telephone systems (ISDN) lines and electronic file transfer (FTP).

7. The launch of the live programme was preceded by a review and streamlining of taped programming. Several taped programmes were eliminated or consolidated. Since the launch, the number of cassette tapes distributed by the Department has been reduced by 25 per cent. The overall target is to reduce the distribution of taped programmes by 50 per cent before the beginning of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. As a result, cost-efficiencies are being realized and a more timely, up-to-the-minute news product is being delivered worldwide through the use of various methods.

8. Staffing levels among regional units have improved, and a near-parity level in all official languages has been achieved.

III. Format and content

9. A key component in the shift to daily programming was the development of a programme format of interest to broadcasters: a 15-minute daily (Monday-Friday) package in the six official languages of the Organization. While focusing primarily on news developments from the entire United Nations system, the programme also includes interviews, background reports, features, updates from peacekeeping missions and coverage of activities of United Nations agencies around the world relating to development. More than

50 per cent of the content is, in fact, gathered from activities in the field.

10. As the launch of the live programme coincided with the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, pilot project began by providing extensive coverage of this historic event, including exclusive interviews, background reports and features. In addition to the 15-minute live broadcasts in the six official languages, statements by Heads of State or Government, special reports, interviews, summaries of the debate and other activities were transmitted to partner stations, and national and international networks. During the three-day event, over 300 radio transmissions were fed to 140 radio broadcasters in 77 countries. The Millennium Summit also provided an opportunity for the 15-minute programme of United Nations Radio to carry wide-ranging coverage of the statements made and the interviews that were carried out with the dignitaries. A total of 105 broadcasts in the six official languages and in Portuguese were transmitted for live broadcast by 61 radio stations in 42 countries, and a total of 12 Heads of State were interviewed on the programme.

11. The dissemination of information on the Millennium Summit by United Nations Radio serves as an example of the breadth of coverage of a special event. Whenever there are special events at the United Nations, United Nations Radio has the ability to provide direct and multilingual transmissions of statements and excerpts to every region of the world. In the coming months, United Nations Radio will provide special coverage of all the upcoming conferences, special sessions of the General Assembly and other high-profile events planned for the current year.

12. The live radio programmes continue to report daily on events throughout the world from the perspective of the United Nations, often providing a view not heard on other media. More than half of this content comes from activities undertaken away from Headquarters. Among recent reports, an interview with a senior Russian military officer serving with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone was later picked up as an important international news story by the Russian media. Similarly, the coverage of the refugee situation in Guinea and Afghanistan gave key United Nations officials and experts on the scene immediate news exposure through interviews with United Nations Radio. First-hand radio reports from the first border crossing by United Nations peacekeepers through Eritrean and Ethiopian frontlines

were also prominently featured by the media. The programme also provided a public service mechanism, spreading information on the prevention of the highly contagious Ebola virus through interviews with United Nations experts on this issue. United Nations Radio was thus linking an educational message with news of the virus's latest outbreak.

13. Particularly noteworthy also was a round-table discussion with the most senior officials from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Rwanda and Burundi, who were present for the Security Council meeting on the Great Lakes crisis in February 2001. The 40-minute meeting was the first time these senior officials had sat across a table in this manner. The discussion was taken live by ten African radio stations, which is the maximum number our current technology can accommodate. The discussion was transmitted to a number of other stations later. For added impact, the transcript of the discussion was immediately placed on the NewsCentre on the United Nations web site.

14. The timely nature of the programming has also enabled partner stations worldwide to track the progress of United Nations relief efforts in the aftermath of natural disasters, such as during the recent floods in Viet Nam and the earthquake in India. The Secretary-General's reaction to breaking news is featured on a regular basis. United Nations Radio has also been able to cover issues of priority to Member States, such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the protection of children in armed conflict, the advancement of women, as well as the other core issues of concern to the United Nations.

IV. Building partnerships

15. The pilot programme is received by listeners worldwide through a range of transmission vehicles. In addition to the arrangements made with satellite communications providers and short-wave transmitters, the Department's International Broadcasting Centre is used for telephone transmissions. The Internet is also used to transmit the signal via FTP, in addition to transmissions via electronic mail and daily postings to the United Nations web site. The range of transmission vehicles is part of the effort to provide audiences and partner networks worldwide with options for reception of the programme suited to the needs of each specific market.

16. Partnerships with local, regional and national broadcasters worldwide are an important component of the project. Prior to the launch, the Department made extensive use of surveys to determine the level of the broadcasters' interest in the proposed programme and their ability to receive and transmit the programming directly, utilizing dedicated time slots for rebroadcasting. A summary of the progress made in establishing these partnerships is elaborated in the following paragraphs and classified in accordance with regions and languages of transmission.

17. The Spanish language live programme is transmitted directly to over 40 partner stations in Central and South America, the Caribbean and the United States of America. All methods of distribution are utilized, including telephone dial-up via the International Broadcasting Centre and electronic file transfer. The partner stations include both local and national broadcasters. In addition, the programme is carried by the radio service of the Organization of American States to broadcasters in the region, and by local broadcasters in the New York metropolitan area.

18. The live programming in Arabic is distributed from the International Broadcasting Centre at Headquarters and carried by 15 partner stations in the Middle East and North Africa, including Radio Cairo, Radio Algeria, Radio Bahrain, Radio and Television of Morocco, the Voice of Palestine, as well as national radio stations in Abu Dhabi, Somalia, Tunisia and Yemen. In addition, the Department has arranged with a communications provider to broadcast the live programming in Arabic via short wave. Two short-wave frequencies are used to transmit the programming five days a week at 18:30 GMT to Africa and the Middle East. Negotiations are near conclusion with the satellite communications organization ArabSat, the leading provider of satellite distribution in the Arab world, to distribute the Arabic radio programming to all stations and networks broadcasting in Arabic from the region to western Europe.

19. The Chinese language live programming, transmitted by electronic file transfer, is received and rebroadcast by China National Radio and China Radio International, reaching an audience of hundreds of millions. Utilizing telephone and electronic file transfer, two partner stations in the United States of America also rebroadcast the Chinese language programming to the Chinese-speaking community.

20. The live programming in French is transmitted to approximately 50 partner stations in Africa and the Caribbean. In Africa, some of the partner stations include local, national and regional broadcasters such as Africa No. 1 (Gabon), Radio Brazzaville, Radio Nationale du Sénégal, Channel Africa (South Africa), Radio Mali, Radio Cameroun, Radio Rwanda, la Voix du Sahel and the national radio of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the Caribbean, the programme is received and rebroadcast by Radio Haiti and Radio Havana International. The programme is also rebroadcast by Canal EF that reaches listeners in Africa, Canada and France. In addition, an arrangement exists with another international communications network to transmit the programming via three short-wave frequencies to francophone Africa and the Middle East.

21. The target area for the live programme in Russian is the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States. This covers a wide geographical area extending from northern Europe to Central Asia. Arrangements are in place for the daily transmission of the live programme to the Voice of Russia. To account for the numerous time zones in this region, the Russian programme is broadcast on this national broadcasting network three times a day.

22. The live programming in English is broadcast in Africa, North and South America, the Caribbean and Europe. It is also transmitted via telephone and electronic file transfer to partner stations, including the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Tanzania, the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Channel Africa and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria. The Department has arranged for a regional satellite distributor to re-transmit the signal to 12 partner stations in the Caribbean, as well as in Guyana and Suriname. In addition, an arrangement has been made with a communications provider to transmit three short-wave frequencies to Africa and the Middle East.

23. The Internet has been a valuable tool for distribution and promotion of the radio pilot project. Since the launch of the programme, the Department has made resources available to offer the live programming on the United Nations web site. The programme is digitized in the six official languages in Real Media and MP3 formats, making it available for Internet streaming, downloading and distributing to partner

stations minutes after the completion of the live broadcast.

24. In addition to making the programming available on the Internet, information on the pilot programming is presented on individual language web pages, featuring headlines and excerpts of the current day's programme, scheduling updates, and contact information.

25. The radio project is one of the central instruments in the overall departmental effort to take the United Nations message more effectively to the mass media of developing countries, very few of which can afford to assign correspondents to United Nations Headquarters. Indeed, almost all the radio stations taking these live news feeds are from the developing world.

V. Next steps

26. One of the most telling reactions to the launch and value of the pilot project of United Nations Radio has come from the Director-General of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria. In a letter to the Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Lagos, the Director-General stated: "It is, therefore, important that you know, as well as United Nations Headquarters, that this is to us an extremely valuable service, especially that we do not have the resources to post a correspondent to the United Nations, which would be an ideal situation for a radio service the size of Radio Nigeria. By bridging this communication gap, the United Nations has expanded its activities in Africa's largest listenership. This can only be a good thing."

27. The main thrust of the live daily broadcasting project of United Nations Radio is to continue expanding partnerships with national and private broadcasting organizations. The Department's aim, in this regard, is to foster a greater number of rebroadcasting initiatives and to tailor its production output to the needs of regional audiences and partner stations.

28. A second area of priority for the Department of Public Information is that of enhancing cooperation with the United Nations common system to generate and disseminate more information. By tapping the information reserve of the United Nations system, United Nations Radio will be able to offer a comprehensive public information service about a wide range of core United Nations issues to radio audiences

and partner stations around the world. While some modest steps have already been taken in that direction, the Department will continue to seek closer links with the specialized agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system, as well as with the peacekeeping missions and other field activities in gathering material for daily distribution from New York.

29. The newsworthiness of daily transmissions by United Nations Radio will be enhanced by continuing to develop the field network of contributors. More frequent access by the staff of United Nations Radio to senior officials within the United Nations system, to delegations and to staff in the field will be pursued more vigorously in order to diversify programme content and generate more timely material.

30. As part of modernization plans, new technology will continue to be introduced in order to streamline editing and networking between language sections and studios. Efforts to create an open newsroom will continue in order to ensure an effective and smooth work flow.

31. The Department of Public Information will explore the possibility of providing more feeds via satellite to partner stations to reduce reliance on conventional methods of transmission via telephone. Continued efforts will be made to deliver the programming via the Internet, using FTP and electronic mail.

32. The live daily programming of United Nations Radio is an integral part of the Department's reorientation to better serve the global 24-hour news cycle. The Secretary-General is seeking feedback from Member States on its impact so far and guidance for the future development of the daily international radio broadcasting capacity for the Organization.

33. Authorization for the pilot project will conclude this year. Neither the mandate nor the resources exist for its continuation in the biennium 2002-2003. The future of the project therefore depends on the General Assembly's assessment of it, in accordance with resolution 55/136 B, with a view to taking a decision on the matter during the fifty-sixth session.



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Continued multilingual development, maintenance and enrichment of the United Nations web site

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/136 B, the General Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to develop and enhance the United Nations web sites in all the official languages of the Organization, and requested him to continue to develop proposals for consideration by the Committee on Information at its twenty-third session, keeping in mind the building of modular parity, which should ultimately lead to achieving full parity among the official languages of the United Nations.

II. Background

2. The Committee on Information considered the first report on this issue (A/AC.198/1999/6) at the first part of its twenty-first session, in May 1999. The follow-up report requested by the Committee (A/AC.198/1999/9) was considered at its resumed twenty-first session, in November 1999. A subsequent report (A/AC.198/2000/7) was requested by the Committee on Conferences and was considered by that Committee as well as by the Committee on Information at its twenty-second session. The present report provides an update on the development of the United

Nations web site, as well as future development plans for the site.

III. Update of the United Nations web site

3. The Internet revolution has opened up new opportunities for delivering the United Nations message directly to the world at large, without the need to depend on intermediary disseminators. The new medium, used in conjunction with traditional means of distribution, has dramatically extended the reach of the United Nations message to all corners of the world. It is also being used as a vehicle to carry traditional printed messages and radio broadcasts at a fraction of the former cost. As the use of the Internet increases, the reach of the United Nations message will become much wider, while the dissemination cost per unit will also drop sharply.

4. The United Nations web site has continued to grow during the past year at a phenomenal pace. The Department of Public Information has been able to keep up with the ever-increasing task of development, maintenance and updating through the use of creative techniques to automate routine maintenance tasks. This has enabled staff to devote more time to the enhancement of the site. The United Nations web site



now transfers daily nearly 12 gigabytes (about 12 billion bytes) of information and registers more than 3 million hits a day from more than 159 countries. This tremendous growth in the use of United Nations web sites is evidenced by the increase in the number of hits from 489,000 in January 1996 to more than 71 million in December 2000. In 2000, more than 488 million hits were recorded, which is equivalent to serving 15.4 files every second every day. The raw number of accesses to a web site sometimes portrays an inflated usage level. However, the Department has undertaken a detailed analysis of web site usage that shows the number of actual documents retrieved and viewed by users, based on which it is estimated that an average of 370,000 documents are currently viewed by users each day.

5. On 1 September 2000, a completely redesigned web site was launched simultaneously in all six languages of the Organization. This was a major step toward parity among the official languages, by providing a "splash page" in which the user chooses the language and is presented with similar-looking pages in each of the languages. Navigation through the site has been made much simpler, with additional cross-links and a more intuitive interface. New material continues to be added in all official languages. Since September 2000, a total of 10,880 documents and information materials has been added in languages other than English and French. For the first time, in addition to the web cast, all statements made to the General Assembly during the Millennium Summit and the subsequent general debate at the fifty-fifth session were uploaded to the site. All provisional verbatim records of the General Assembly are now available online. Web casts and the uploading of statements will become regular features of the United Nations web site in the near future.

IV. Future development

6. Among the new additions to the site are the web pages for the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization; the opening of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly; the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships; the Millennium Summit treaty event; the Messengers of Peace and Goodwill Ambassadors event; United Nations Day 2000; the Security Council meeting on women; peace and security; the United Nations World Television Forum 2000; the International Convention

against Transnational Organized Crime; the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations; World AIDS Day 2000; the Fourth International Conference on New and Restored Democracies; Human Rights Day 2000; the 10-year review process of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission; and the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development.

7. While multilingual development, maintenance and enrichment of the United Nations web site has been at the forefront of the Internet activities of the Department of Public Information, progress has been slower than expected due to a lack of in-house expertise and resources in the non-working languages of the Secretariat. Furthermore, as indicated in an earlier report (A/AC.198/2000/7), it is also vital that the issue of public information content creation be separated from the issue of ongoing maintenance, coordination and management. Until those two issues — content creation and ongoing maintenance, coordination and management — are dealt with, the realization of a truly equal multilingual web site will remain elusive.

8. The Department of Public Information wishes to reiterate that in order to ensure the regular maintenance and enhancement of the web site it needs a sound foundation in terms of staffing and resources. To that end, some measures have already been taken within existing resources, but further development of the web site will require additional allocations. Accordingly, the Department believes that the feasibility study called for in an earlier report (A/AC.198/2000/7) will still need to be undertaken in order to ascertain the requirements with respect to staffing, technology and content for the true multilingual development of the United Nations web site.

9. In order to achieve significant progress in the multilingual development of the web site, the issue of content creation and development will need to be dealt with on an organizational basis. At present, official documentation is created in various Secretariat locations, using different formats. The Steering Committee on Reform and Management, led by the Deputy Secretary-General, has requested an organization-wide review of the information and communications technology policy, including content management. With the adoption of uniform policy, it can be expected that procedures will be streamlined

and many of the diverse methods of document production will be harmonized. The Steering Committee dealt extensively with the issue of coherence of information, both within the Secretariat and for the benefit of the public. It identified the need for a United Nations policy to satisfy requirements concerning: (a) availability of documents (coherent and stringent implementation of standards for, *inter alia*, formats and metadata); (b) integrity of data (data to be captured only once, classification schemes strictly applied, authenticity of documents); and (c) confidentiality (access rules and mechanisms, security of access, security for data modifications).

10. In 2000, the Publications Board finalized and adopted an administrative instruction on electronic publications which lays down policy guidelines for the United Nations presence on the Internet. The guidelines deal with content planning, responsibility, domain names and publications policy. Following a review by the Office of Legal Affairs, the guidelines will be issued as an administrative instruction (ST/AI/2001/---). The guidelines provide for the establishment of a working group on Internet matters, involving all content providing offices. Once the guidelines have been widely disseminated and utilized, it can be expected that United Nations Internet publishing will be better coordinated and more consistent. In particular, the working group will consider, on a regular basis and with the participation of all departments, content-related matters, such as duplication of materials, and will oversee overall adherence to the guidelines.

V. Proposals

11. To date, six proposals for the further development of the United Nations web site have been presented to the Committee on Information for its consideration, each of which has involved the allocation of additional resources for the multilingual development, maintenance and enrichment of the United Nations web site. Further proposals could continue to be developed. However, given the constraints imposed by a zero-growth budget and the fact that such proposals would also entail significant resource requirements, much of the future development and enhancement of the web site will depend on policy decisions by the General Assembly with regard to making official documents available in all languages free of charge. In addition,

decisions regarding the gradual development of the various language components will be necessary. It should be noted, however, that regardless of any such decisions the gap between the English and the other language sites will continue to grow. Therefore, efforts to ensure total language parity are bound to become more challenging and at the same time more resource-intensive.

12. In earlier reports to the Committee on Information (A/AC.198/1999/6 and A/AC.198/2000/7), it was reiterated that initial consideration by the Committee and the General Assembly should lead to the establishment of a sound footing for regular maintenance and enhancement, the two basic criteria of any successful web site. Therefore, the proposal presented in document A/AC.198/2000/7, annex, continues to represent the minimum resource requirement to that end.

13. Accordingly, it is proposed that current efforts be continued and that greater emphasis be accorded to automation techniques, taking advantage of the ongoing improvement of technology. The Information Technology Section in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, which manages the United Nations web site, has been restructured to focus on the development of the language sites, and includes a team for each language.

14. During 2001, it is expected that all resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as those of the Economic and Social Council, will be made available through the web site at no charge. However, in order to provide additional parliamentary documentation, guidance from the General Assembly is necessary in view of its resolution 51/211 F, in which it indicated that parliamentary documentation be made available on a fee-for-service basis determined by associated costs.

15. The Department of Public Information will continue to develop special web pages to mark important days and events, and to work with substantive offices to develop sites for major United Nations conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly. To the extent possible and practical and subject to the availability of material in the various languages, all efforts will be made to present such sites in the six official languages.

16. The Department of Public Information has undertaken the task of identifying specific portions of the main English language site for rendition in each of the other official languages. Each language site is scheduled to be enhanced in small modules. The first effort in that direction is to make General Assembly and Security Council resolutions available on the site in all official languages. The Department wishes to express its gratitude to the Government of Spain for providing an associate expert for the development of the Spanish site and to the International Organization of la Francophonie for providing an expert to work on the French site. Those contributions are expected to have a positive impact on the additional development of the French and Spanish sites over the next two years.

17. The policy issues concerning the question of making all public information available in all official languages will be examined through an interdepartmental working group.

18. Although textual content will remain the primary focus, multimedia content will continue to be developed, which will contribute to expanding the audience of the live United Nations Radio project, as well making photographs more readily available.

19. The search capacity on the United Nations web site has already been dramatically improved by migrating all press releases into a database-driven system. It is proposed that, following further testing and fine-tuning, that system be gradually introduced to the remainder of the web site, thereby significantly reducing maintenance requirements and at the same time cutting development time and cost. The Department will continuously analyse user statistics to determine web usage patterns, as well as the path that users take through the site. Regular user surveys will form an integral part of the ongoing evaluation of the site.

20. With a view to making the United Nations web site accessible to all, special measures will continue to be taken to ensure that the site remains available to persons with disabilities. A "text only" path serves pages with no graphics, and is accessible to the blind as well as users whose connection speed is low or whose equipment is not highly sophisticated.

VI. Conclusion

21. Although he is mindful of the request for proposals to enhance United Nations web sites in all official languages of the Organization for the consideration of the Committee on Information at its twenty-third session, keeping in mind modular parity, it is the view of the Secretary-General that it would be a disservice to Member States to continue to develop proposals that entail significant expenditures. At the same time, it is important to reiterate that the achievement of full parity among the official languages will require additional resources. Moreover, policy decisions that will have to be taken with regard to content creation will also entail resource allocations. The present report has thus confined itself to realistic and achievable proposals, some of which are already under way. As noted above, the administrative and budgetary support required to undertake the development, maintenance and enrichment efforts, as outlined in document A/AC.198/2000/7, annex I, continues to be the minimum support necessary for any realistic progress in that regard.

22. The policy decisions outlined above will no doubt lead to an effective implementation of the mandates given to the Department of Public Information with respect to the multilingual development, maintenance and enrichment of United Nations web sites.